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BALLADS OF THE PLAINS.

BY EMILY E. SLOAN.

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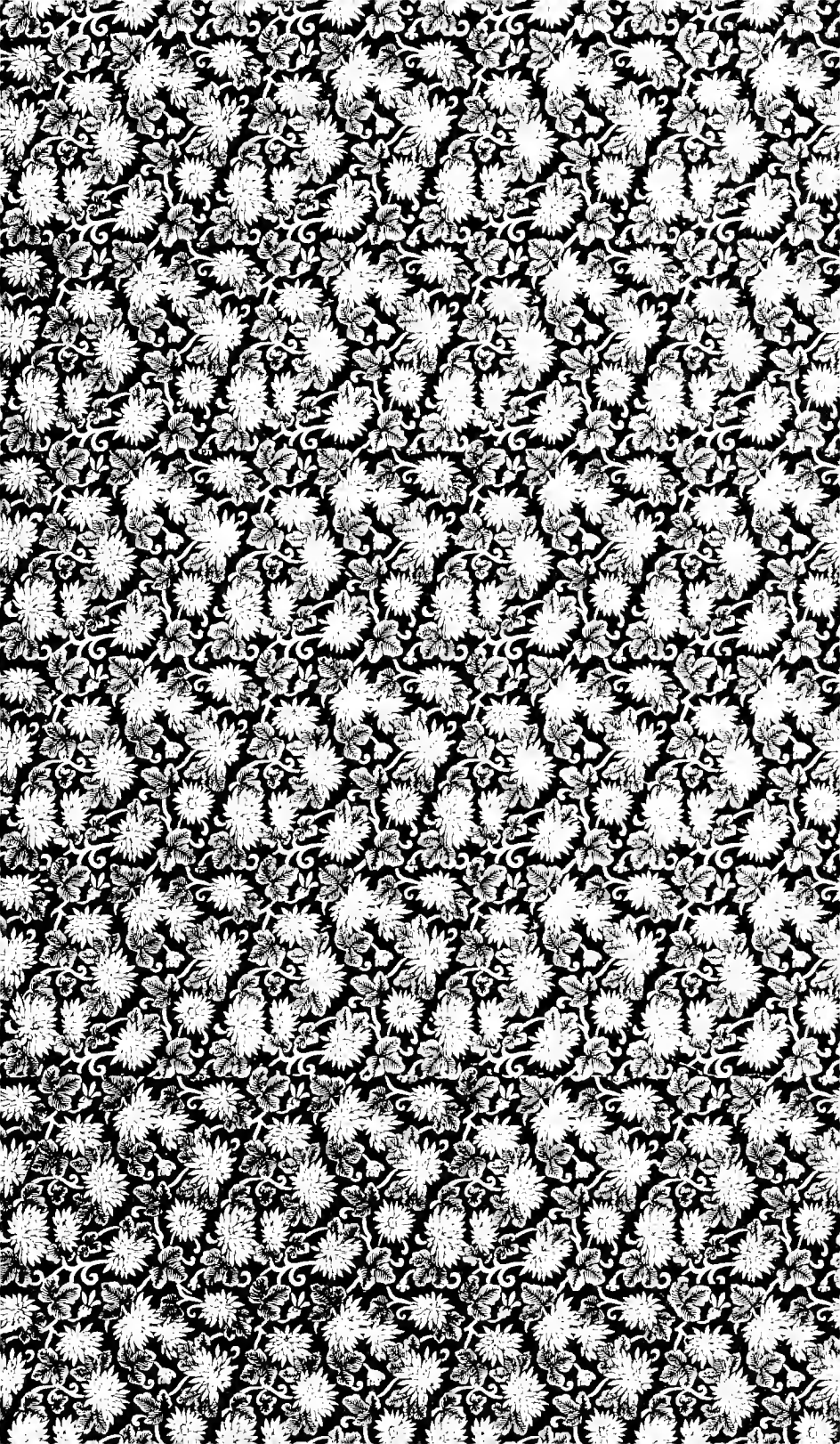


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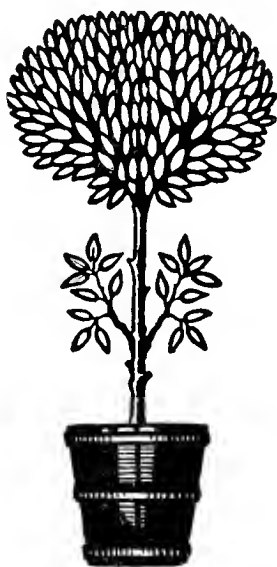
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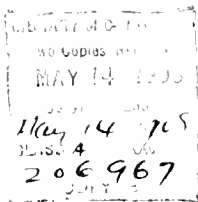


Ballads of the Plains

BY

EMILY E. SLOAN





PREFACE.

This book is entirely a western production, the poems being composed by a western author, illustrated by a western artist and the volume published by a western publishing house.

Lovingly dedicated to the people of the West by the author.

EMILY E. SLOAN.

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PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS.

Look away from the mountain,
Look away from the sea—
Turn aside from the noisy city
To the prairie-quiet and free;
Come where the kildeers flutter,
Come where the curlews call,
Come where the peace of nature
So sweetly rests over all.
Saddle the little bay pony,
And follow me o'er the divide;
'Tis the rarest day in the month of May,
On the prairie, green and wide.
Come where the ground birds twitter,
Come where the meadow larks sing,
List to the voice of Nature, here in the lovely Spring.

Over the boundless prairie
Decked in her robes of green,
Bluebells nod in the sunlight,
And buttercups grow between.
Just as the sun comes slowly—
Shedding its softest light,
Earth is dressed in loveliness
After a long dark night.

There are a thousand cattle
Still on the bedding ground,
Cowpunchers eating breakfast,
On the sod seated around.
Coffee and lightest biscuits,
As only Cook can bake,
Here in the prairie cowcamp,
They broil the finest steak.

After the meal is over
The pilot rides away,
Looking up a location—
Where they camp another day.

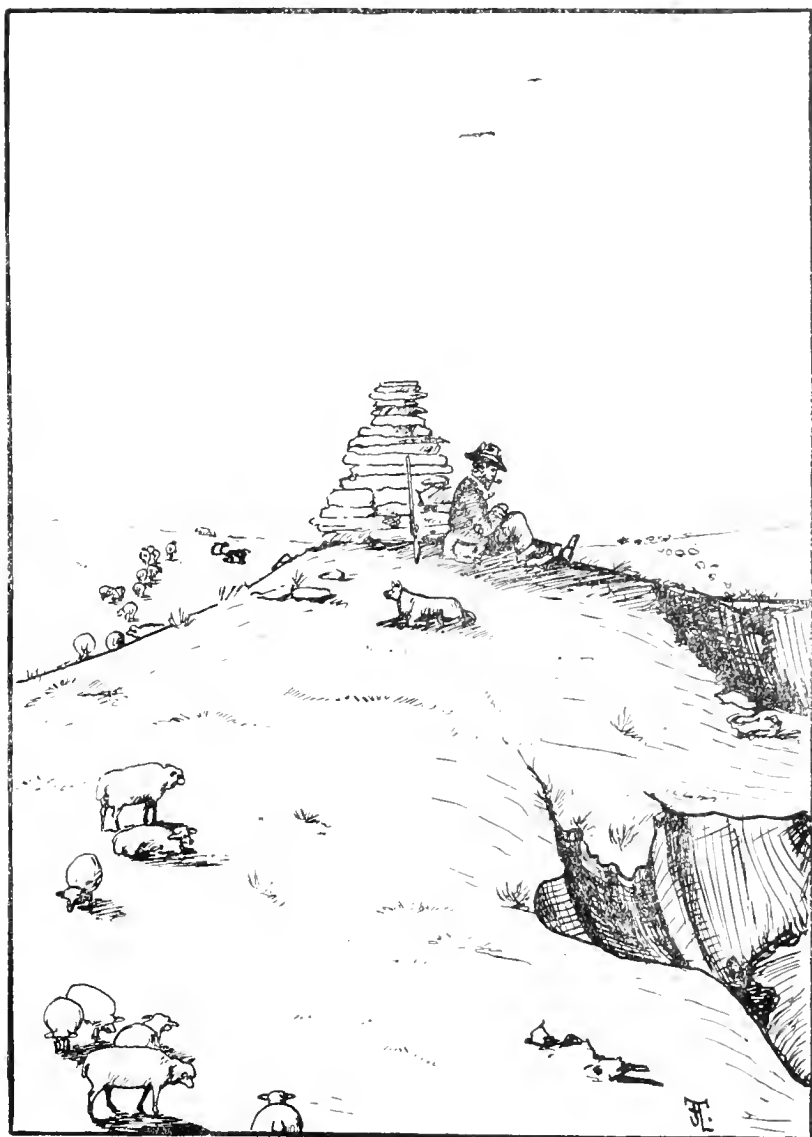
After him the mess wagon,
With camp stove trailed behind,
Cook himself is the driver,
The best driver you can find.

Then comes the bedding wagon,
With "Night Hawk" half asleep,
And after him the "Wrangler,"
With horses wild and fleet.
You hear their bells atinkling,
And then the lowing herd,
Most every man is singing,
Same as a prairie bird.

That's how they do each summer,
Camping down every night,
Up and away in the morning,
Before it is scarcely light,
Weary the long night watches,
Hard is the blanket bed.
Still you see they are happy,
With blue sky overhead.

The life is not so dreary,
Nor is it yet so sweet,
Here you see the worst on earth,
With their gentler brothers meet.
Each puncher has a story
About his former life,
One fell out with his father,
Another one lost his wife.

Cowboys make the best of it,
In sunshine wind or rain,
If they should go complaining,
There is nothing they can gain.
Now let us leave the cowcamp,
And to the sheep camp go,
You see the lonely herder,
Wandering to and fro.



All day long he must listen to bleating of the sheep.

All day long he must listen,
To bleating of the sheep.
And when the darkness gathers,
It is near them he must sleep,
They tell me that 'tis often,
The herder goes insane,
Is it loneliness, or tramping,
Or bleating turns his brain?

You must come to the cabin,
Upon the sage brush slope,
There dwells an old bachelor,
With the grimmest kind of hope,
He tells me he won't marry,
Till he has made a "Start,"
Year after year he lives alone,
And harder grows his heart.

Each day he counts his livestock,
All the colts and calves,
It only is housekeeping,
That he mostly does by halves.
At evening he is seated
Beside the fire alone.
He smoke his pipe and worries,
Lest his cattle might roam,

A little way beyond him,
Mid cactii and mid sage,
A family is living,
And the neighbor's just his age,
Boys and girls both come running,
When at night his work is o'er,
His wife calls out her greeting,
From the little cabin door.

He may never be as wealthy,
As his friend on the slope,
But there is joy in living,

There is joy as well as hope.
If you don't think the prairie,
Has its charms; come and see—
I'll show you where the people
Are jolly kind, and free.

KING OF THE RANGE.

Have you heard of Tisdell's buckskin,
The horse that's king of the range;
Which roams from Battle Creek divide,
To Indian Creek for a change?
He is at home at Rocky Butte,
And again at Four Mile Creek;
If you are out and after him,
He's bound to take a sneak—

Before you guess what he's about—
He's back to TwoTop again,
All the men on the northern range,
Can't drive him into a pen.
When a three-year-old he was branded
F upon the thigh,
He broke away with a hackamore,
And then with a wilful stride—

Tossing proudly his noble head,
His stout limbs quivered and shook,
A scornful glance from flaming eyes,
And back to the range he took.
He led a bunch from that every day,
As before his foes he pranced;
Many a rope has been thrown at him,
And many a puncher danced—

Just for a chance to tie him down,
To bridle his lofty head,
Shaking his main with proud disdain,
They'd take him alive or dead.

Once he was penned when five years old,
And he charged around like mad,
Tore the top rail from the corrall,
And straightway went to the bad.

Ah, that was ten long years ago,
And a fair faced laddie thought
He had the prize of all the range,
But Buckskin struggled and fought—
No one has penned him since that day,
There has been offered reward,
But where's the man to have him penned—
In corrall of wire or board?

Horse men have tried and tried again,
To pen this galloping steed,
He'll break back on the same old track,
With most astonishing speed,
Then turning, toss his head and paw,
And snort like a wild reindeer,
The men give way, I've heard them say,
And some have been known to cheer.

Still he lopes o'er the whole north range,
In defiance to mankind,
He's been a target for anyone,
To shoot; if he had the mind.
He's the King of the Northern range,
His proud head quivers and shakes,
If anyone comes too close to him,
He'll straightway take to the brakes.

SANDY ON THE RANGE—

There were two cousins I've been told
Who lived mid Scotland's heather old;
Jim Waddle, junior partner there—
And Sandy Craig, with auburn hair.

Now both had managed to amass,
The "Golden Fleece," which each held fast,
Until Jim took the "western" craze,
And left poor Sandy in amaze.

He crossed the ocean, westward bound,
Came farther west, and looked around;
As everything he saw was new,
His interest was unbounded, too.
The flocks and herds most took his eye,
He with Scotch shrewdness, said, "I'll buy,"
And that he did, then wed a maid;
Instead of going back, he stayed.

He wrote to Sandy many things,
Said horses in the West had wings,
Said cowboy's life was rough and hard,
Then said, "Come out and see your pard."
And so it happened on a day—
When cattle grazed in peaceful way,
And cowboys all at rest did seem,
Then Sandy came upon the scene.

He looked them o'er with scornful eye,
And said, "I greatly wonder why—
That folks should say life's hard with ye,
I find it is a luxuree."
But the next morn the wind arose,
Each puncher put on extra clothes;
Now one had borrowed Sandy's coat,
And the result, I think you'll note.

Then Jim took Sandy out to see
The cattle grazing quietly,
He mounted him upon a steed
Which was not known by name or breed.
Then a cold drizzle settled in,
Sandy was chilled from foot to chin.
He bore it all in silence 'til,
The buckskin pony slipped and fell.

He landed on his hands and knees,
He hadn't breath enough to sneeze,
His clothes were daubed with gumbo blue;
The rain had soaked them thru and thru.
The boys said it was then he swore,
He was not warm enough before;
That night as he lay there in camp,
I think his spirits were quite damp.

Next morn' he started home again,
In spite of all the drizzling rain,
He'd had his fill of luxuree,
Upon the prairie, wild and free.
He never will come back I know,
Tho' invitations to him go,
Says Scotland's good enough for him,
He'll live apart from Cousin Jim.

WINTER ON THE PLAINS.

Winter has settled on the plain,
The long divides are white again,
The thick gray clouds hang near the world—
Their snowy banners seem unfurled.

The greaswood and the sagebrush gray,
Were mantled well with frost today;
Not much to rest the wanderers sight—
The old Earth dressed in snowy white.

No living thing around is seen,
Save in a hollow or ravine,
The herds are huddled, shivering there;
They keenly feel the frosty air.

Maybe a lonely coyote strolls
Across the gullies and the knolls;
Or rabbits run about and play,
As if it were a warm fair day.



But when the day is fairly done,
The clouds roll quickly, sadly on—
The gentle Moon sends forth her beams,
Ah, then it is a world of dreams!

We smile again with new delight,
Winter has settled here tonight,
Tho' cold and lone, we know 'tis best,
That Mother Earth should have her rest

A FIGHT IN THE GUMBO—

The boys had camped down on the flat mid the sage,
And it had been raining three nights and three days,
The sky was still murky; the cold wind still blew,
The foreman was cross, and the punchers were too.

Now, "Stuffy George" had been three long hours on guard,
He had waited in vain for his relief pard;
At last in the dim dismal light of the morn,
"Chicago Kid" rode up, and "Stuffy" showed scorn.

The words that were spoken were hasty and hot,
"Chicago" cried boldly, "You're whipped on the spot."
They sprang from their saddles, each one held a quirt;
Their 'slickers' were heavy, their spurs ground the dirt;

Each one lashed the other, both blind in their rage,
And "Stuffy" fell down, mid the cactus and sage;
"Chicago" stood o'er him, and lashed him with vim,
Then "Stuffy" jumped up, made a wild rush at him.

Their boots were so heavy, the gumbo so soft,
It's hard to tell really, who fell the most oft.
Then came one more puncher and laid down the law;
"Just let up on that boys, and call it a draw."

Each looked at the other, all spattered with mud,
Both were ready to quit, both wished to be good,

"Chicago's" brave spirit would hardly give out,
"A draw may be hanged; He is well licked, no doubt."

Back to the wagon "Stuffy" turned his young bay,
And peaceful he was for many a long day.
When the sun rose that morn the sky was so clear,
There was peace in the camp, and also good cheer.

WHEN COOK LOST OUT.

The Tar Heel was a puncher,
Who was gentle, good, and mild;
A pleasant spoken fellow,
And as happy as a child.
He'd bust the meanest bronchos,
Stand the other fellows' guard,
Share his 'tarp' with a stranger,
And was everybody's pard.

'Twas known among the punchers
That you couldn't make him mad—
If all the rest were grouchy,
You would see his smile was glad.
The boys had all oft wondered
If the Tar Heel couldn't fight,
They would still be in the dark,
But the cook turned on the light.

He staid in camp one morning,
And the sour dough was tough,
The cook was always grouchy,
And today a trifle gruff.
He liked to vent his anger
On the fellows that were meek;
He turned to Tar Heel roughly,
Said, "You've got a lot of cheek—

"You sat in my sour dough pan,
Squashed the bread clean out of sight;

You dassent to deny it,
Or else you and me will fight."
His manner wasn't pleasant,
Tho' the Tar Heel viewed him mild,
He said, "Well, we'll just mix it,"
And they saw that he was riled.

Of all the fights, by Jingo,
That the punchers ever saw,
It started up that morning,
When Tar Heel caved in Cook's jaw.
They punched and mauled each other,
Overturned the coffee pot;
And sent the steak a-flying,
Tho' it was sizzling hot.

Had a Fitz-Corbett mix up,
Jammed and hammered back and forth,
Round camp they went in circles,
Sometimes south and sometimes north.
The punchers were all learning
That Tar Heel could make a fight,
He whipped the Cook that morning,
Right in everybody's sight.

Mauled and thumped to a finish,
Black of eyes and sore of head,
Cook retired to his corner,
Groaning that he was most dead.
That Tar Heel was a fighter,
From that day there was no doubt,
The boys were all quite willing
Cook should do the finding out.

OUR AUTUMN RIDE.

Over the brown, brown prairie,
Wrapped in its purple haze,
You and I ride together,
These beautiful autumn days.

Prairie so wide and lonely,
So still on this frosty morn,
With essence of the sagebrush
Far over the wide plains borne.

Glimmer the pools in sunshine
Trampled; the grasses so brown—
Circles the red sun lowly,
Sparkles the Earth with his crown.

Gentle the soft south breezes,
Borne here from some warmer zone,
Lowling of kine far distant—
And you and I are alone.

The Plains are grand in autumn,
Dear Indian Summer days,
I think an angel of peace
Hides deep in the soft, warm haze.

Only echoes of summer
Linger along the divides,
Just a whisper of winter,
All across the north hillsides.

Precious the days of autumn,
So quickly come to a close,
Just as you and I, Darling,
After day's tasks seek repose.

CHARLIE AND "AVALANCHE."

"Black Charlie's" purse was getting slim,
But that was nothing new for him;
The seasons came, the seasons went,
And Charlie seldom had a cent.

He'd work all summer on the range,
And then for rest he'd take a change,

He'd loaf 'round town the winter thru,
You see he'd nothing else to do.

When Spring came, he would have no clothes,
His boots both worn out at the toes—
For Care sat lightly on his brow,
He couldn't worry then, nor now.

One autumn when the plains were brown,
"Black Charlie" rode toward the town;
He met a fellow on the way,
Who had a horse to trade that day.

The horse was jaded, worn, and sore;
So Charlie thought he wanted more,
And when at last the trade was made—
Charlie had been ten dollars paid.

In ten days he was broke again,
He needed money that was plain,
The county fair had just begun.
Charlie rode out to see the fun.

The horse was rested up quite well,
And Charlie had a mind to sell.
As he rode near the Judges' stand,
It seemed some trouble was on hand.

He was about to ride on past,
When someone came toward him fast;
"Just one more horse is needed here,
And you must ride for us that's clear."

"All right," said Charlie, "I'm your man,
I think it is a first rate plan."
"Avalanche" was the sorrel's name,
And Charlie was quite, quite glad he came.

The sorrel was third in first heat,
The people thought that he was beat—

In second heat he came ahead,
"A splendid horse," bystanders said.

And Charlie, in his cowboy clothes,
A sudden champion arose—
So when came the deciding heat,
The jockies found that they were beat.

He'd left the others far behind,
The judges scarcely words could find—
To well express their great surprise,
For Avalanche had won the prize.

"Black Charlie" took the purse and smiled,
He was as pleased as any child,
The people cheered till they were hoarse,
Charlie was satisfied, of course.

They say he set 'em up that night,
But that you know, was only right,
And ere the winter snow did fall
Charlie had spent that money, all.

SUMMER ON THE PLAINS.

Summer comes slowly to the plain,
The once brown hills are green again;
The great sky holds its wealth of blue,
And all the world is bright and new.

The cattle graze in peaceful way,
Their small calves 'neath the sagebrush lay
The lark nests 'neath the cactus thorn,
He gaily whistles night and morn.

The rattler dozes lazily—
And prairie dogs around him play;
The small child gathers gorgeous flowers,
He loves the sunny, summer hours.

As for me, most longingly,
I look toward the eastern hills,
I think of stately oaks and pines;
Of anemonies and columbines.

Though now I love the prairie wild,
Yet, once was I a woodland child.
And you, my love, must surely know,
Why lovingly my thoughts will go—

To woodlands sweet, and then return,
Where summer winds the prairie burn,
And why, though happy, yet I feel
Sad memories around me steal.

I put my good horse on the lope,
Leave Mem'ry on the distant slope,
And o'er the countless miles of green,
The prairie's beauties I have seen.

And tho' no tree is in my sight—
Badlands to the left and right,
Contentment steals up quietly,
The plains are dear to me and thee.

THE LAST OF THE BUFFALO.

A lone bison stood on the great divide,
Looking away o'er the prairie wide;
Away—where he once roamed happy and free,
From whence in terror he'd turned to flee.

What was his life alone on the great plain?
Nothing to conquer, nothing to gain—
All his vast herd had been taken away.
Only himself remained now to slay.

Great, lone shaggy monarch, war scarred and fierce,
Bullets had failed his great heart to pierce,

Alone he had wandered, many a year,
Causing much wonder, and often fear.

That eve as he looked across the great plain,
Pawing the earth and shaking his mane,
A party of horsemen headed for him,
He saw; with ever increasing vim.

Clattering hoof beats and shimmering arms,
Failed to awaken keenest alarms.
Like a brave soldier he raised his brown head,
Lurched blindly forward, fell over dead.

They skinned his great carcass, broiled steak for each,
Left his bones on the prairie to bleach,
The last of the buffalo, fallen and dead,
Coyotes to feed on his once proud head.

One day as I rode across the divide,
Gazing over the prairie wide,
My pony had stumbled, and I looked down,
There lay a pair of horns on the ground.

I sprung from my saddle, soon had them tied,
Again I started upon my ride,
Then 'twas an old pioneer came my way,
Stopped at our cabin one summer day.

Told of the bison, exiled and forlorn,
Looked with care at each ebony horn,
Told me the story unvarnished and true,
That is how I now give to you.

MEMORIES OF MY OLD HOME.

I sit here watching the sunset,
All purple, and crimson, and gold,
It brings back days of my childhood,
Those merry days of old.

Again I can see the meadow
Where the sweet yellow cowslips grow,
I see the clear and quiet creek,
Where trout dart to and fro.

Ah—now I see the green woodland,
The lane that leads over the hill;
The flowers along its border—
Are blossoming there still.

I think of days in the springtime,
When we swung 'neath the old oak tree;
But those days, now past recalling
Cannot come back to me.

Now, as the still twilight deepens,
And I put my babies to bed—
I do not wish for the old days,
I'm happy here, instead.

Yet, when my ship comes well laden,
With gold dust from over the sea;
I'll look once more on the old home,
That was so dear to me.

NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
The world so still, is asleep,
I am alone in the darkness,
Sadly, my vigil I keep.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
The moon peeps o'er the divide,
Stars twinkle out in the glooming;
Shadows Earth's miseries hide.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
Then the curlews mournful cry,
Lowly, the wind thro' the sagebrush
Moaning, as he passes by.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
Now the old bobcats all prowl,
Far out in the distant badlands,
So wierdly, the coyotes howl.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
The echoes all die away—
Luna her glory is shedding,
Softly, the tall grasses sway.

Night on the wide, wide prairie,
God's prairie, so still and wide,
Sweetly I rest in its silence,
For the prairie is my pride.

THE GOLDEN LIGHT.

Oh, the golden light, oh, the golden light—
That falls o'er the earth at approach of night,
I mean when the sun falls behind the divide,
The light spreads over the prairie wide;
It casts o'er the world a deep, rich glow;
It seems to me like a soft halo.

Oh the golden light, oh, the golden light,
That softens our cares at approach of night;
That light weaves round us a kind of sweet peace,
For our cares are flown, and our troubles cease;
Oh, the golden glow, oh, the golden glow,
Brings sweetest cheer to this earth below.

A RIDE FOR LIFE.

How did I get that scar on my face?
Why, that was in an Indian chase;
When I was only twenty years old
I started out with a heart so bold,
I had for company a peon,
I might just as well have been alone.

We had started for my brother's ranch,
When we both saw, by the merest chance,
After we had traveled half a day,
A cloud of dust, not so far away.

"Apaches Pedro," I cried, "Look out."
Then there arose a terrible shout,
I opened my knife and cut the strings,
That held so fast my blankets and things;
I called to Pedro to leave the trail,
And started out for the distant vale,
Never thinking but what he'd follow,
I soon had crossed a little hollow,
I heard a scream and then I looked back,
Pedro had fallen there on the track.

Of redskins there were nearly a score,
I urged my pony on, all the more,
I was headed for a deep dry creek,
It was then an arrow pierced my cheek.
I turned my pony off to the right,
And then we were both soon out of sight,
O mercy, how they did shriek and scream,
It seemed to me like an evil dream,
When at last the sun went out of sight,
I traveled swiftly into the night.

I dared not stop for many a mile,
For I was wondering all the while,
Just where it was I happened to be.
It had grown so dark I couldn't see;
I was so tired I had to stop,
And tied my pony, so he could crop
The wild salt grass. And I then lay down,
To rest awhile upon the rough ground.
And when I awoke the sun shone hot,
So I saddled up and quit the spot.

I followed an old buffalo track,
Vainly hoping I would see a shack,
I'd not eaten since the noon before,
So you see I wondered all the more,
If I'd ever see my friends again.
For once I hated the great wide plain.
On, on, we went thru the cactus high,
It seemed to me I would surely die.
When just at dusk pony sniffed the air,
I said in my heart a fervent prayer.

My pony then had quickened his pace,
I felt a cool soft breeze on my face;
There was the chapporal rank and high,
It was then I gave one thankful cry,
When we saw that water flowing past.
I was so glad we were saved at last.
Down I lay and drank all that I could,
Never did water seem half so good.
There on the bank of the stream I lay,
And soundly slept till the break of day.

When half awake I thot I heard,
The loud crowing of a barnyard bird,
Then Pony and I followed the sound,
And we were met by a great gray hound,
I went and rapped on the cabin door,
A man I had never seen before,
Opened the door just a little space,
I saw surprise in his honest face,
"Have you been after Injuns?" said he.
"No," I replied, "They've been after me."

He took me in, and then called his wife,
It was the best breakfast of my life,
I rested for a couple of days,
And they turned my pony out to graze,
The arrow wound? It was soon allright,
I'll not deny I had a great fright,

The fellow showed me a safer route,
So one morning I was riding out.
I saw redskins often since that day,
But after that kept out of their way.

A SURPRISE PARTY.

Tommy Jenkins and his brother,
Left the state of Illinois,
And came West to seek their fortunes,
As many another boy.

So when Tommy filed a homestead,
Also Richard took a claim,
And they built a house and horse shed,
On the line that went between.

In the summer both had tasted
Of the cowboy's roving life—
In the winter each was wishing
He had brought along a wife.

But they settled down to comfort,
In the best way that they could;
When the winter winds were howling,
Where their little cabin stood.

Each had spent his share of money—
Buying clothes and also food,
And hitched a team of mustangs up,
To haul in their winter wood.

'Twas January, ninety-one,
The boys started out one day,
To a little glade of timber—
Down the creek five miles away.

Now the Indians were roving,
Causing "Uncle Sam" some grief;

For the Sioux had once been warriors,
As was Sitting Bull their chief.

So it happened on the morning,
Tom and Dick had gone for wood;
Eight young bucks rode up quite swiftly,
Where the little cabin stood.

And finding no one was at home,
They stopped and did their best
To devour all the breadstuff,
And each took a coat and vest.

The fact was they were all arrayed
In raiment stylish and new;
In white shirts and coats and collars;
Socks and underclothing too.

When Tommy and Dick returning,
Were within a mile of home,
They met those bucks all riding;
Clad in raiment of their own.

And those Indians were grinning,
Each one bowed and each said "How"?
As they rode on past still leering,
The boys dared not make a row.

For they were outnumbered sadly,
Neither boy had brought a gun,
They gazed at those redskins riding,
Off, toward the setting of the sun.

"Well, I vow?" said Tommy swearing,
"Now ain't that a lovely sight?"
"It's enough," said Richard sadly,
"To make any fellow fight."

Then before they scarcely knew it,
Both were laughing long and loud,
As those Indians disappeared,
Like a fleeting summer cloud.

Tommy Jenkins and his brother
Didn't have a single cent,
And for the rest of the winter,
To the dances neither went.

OLD "WON'TEATELANTELOPE".

How'd the old man get his title?
Why, I always thought you knew—
If you're wishin' for the story,
I will tell it now to you.

It all happened back in eighty—
I had taken up a claim,
One day there moved in a neighbor,
And I didn't know his name.

Had a wife and 'leven children,
Yoke of oxen, and two dogs,
And was building them a cabin—
Part of sod, and part of logs.

The old man worked vigorously,
'Cept upon the Sabbath day,
Then he'd rest his weary muscles,
And would spend his time to pray.

When he was at prayers one morning,
"Long Ike" Lee rode up to him,
"Here's an ant'lope for you Stranger,
And it won't take long to skin."

He sprung lightly from his saddle,
Threwed the buck upon the ground,

Nodded to the woman, smilin',
Noticed not the old man's frown.

The old man cleared his throat loudly,
Threw his head back just this way,
"Stranger, are you not aware sir,
That this is the Sabbath Day?

"And my family and self, sir,
Cannot partike of the food,
That is slain upon the Sabbath,
Be the motive e'er so good."

Ike stood glancing from the mother,
To the babe within her arms,
Drew himself up all the taller,
Said, "Religion's lost its charms,

"When a woman must go hungry,
And a babe must cry for food,
'Cause an old man's got religion,
Tryin' to show folks he is good;

"Now, Mister Won'teatantelope,
You just leave it there to rot,
You will stay a long time watchin'
'Fore you'll see me on this spot."

Sprung he to his saddle swiftly,
Rode away among the brakes,
Never did we see him loiter—
Where that prayin' held such shakes.

And the name—well, it has sounded,
Coming twenty years or more,
When the last great trump is sounded,
It will echo back once more.

THE CHARM OF THE PRAIRIE.

There's a charm here on the western plains,
Tho it's often hot, and seldom rains,
The wind blows loud and the days are long,
And meadow larks are here with their song.

O, the trees are few and far between,
But the hill sides all are fresh and green,
Prairie dogs bark from their burroughs brown,
When you find your self within their town.

The rattle snakes hiss and eagles soar—
So often near our old cabin door,
We cease to wonder or be affright,
If coyotes howl by our shack at night.

For all thru the day we see our herds,
We hear the song of the prairie birds,
And the air is fresh and light and dry,
And the Earth seems near the deep blue sky.

Just what is the charm we scarcely know,
The range child's face is always aglow;
And we smile anew each night with cheer,
Somehow we are glad that we settled here.

OVER THE PRAIRIE.

I love to take my pony
And ride for many a mile,
Over the rough old prairie,
Awatching all the while—

Clouds that rise in the distance.
Like billows; they roll and roll,
Casting shade o'er the sunglare,
Like peace o'er the troubled soul.



"I love to hear the curlew."

I love to watch the kildeer
As she goes fluttering by,
Skims the shallow water hole,
And then the far off sky.

The peace bird of the prairie,
She minds neither shine nor rain,
She's happy with her birdlings,
Her home's the great wide plain.

I love to see the horses
As they graze over the range,
They lift their heads and listen;
They note the slightest change

In sound or wind, or weather,
O how they all roll and run,
As if the coming storm were,
To them the greatest fun.

I love to hear the curlew,
Tho' so plaintively he cries,
As if his very sadness,
Could pierce the deep blue skies.

The lark offsets his sorrows
O we hear his joyful note,
Rise clear above the curlew's,
From his deep yellow throat.

I love the lonesome prairie,
The wild creatures that abide,
With me in all its stillness—
And from the great world hide.

A CLOCK IN A CYCLONE.

That little clock on the mantle shelf,
Might tell you a story of myself;
Or rather it might speak for us all,
For it's coming thirty years this fall,
Since Tom and I left our eastern home
Far out on the Kansas plains to roam;
We had two girlyes, Lizzie and May,
Who kept off loneliness every day.

We built us a cabin twelve feet square—
And we hadn't any room to spare,
We fenced a little and plowed some too,
And staid there the whole long winter thru.
And when came the early days of June,
The whole wide prairie was all abloom;
How happy we were. The grain was green,
As pretty fields as I'd ever seen.

One day we drove eight miles to town,
Left Lizzie and May at home alone.
We'd done our shopping and started back,
Away to the west the clouds looked black.
I grasped Tom's arm with an anxious cry;
I feared a storm from that murky sky,
"A cyclone, Betty," he hoarsely said,
And drove the horses faster ahead.

The funnel shaped cloud had traveled north,
We followed it for all we were worth,
Both thought of the girls, but neither spoke,
It seemed to me ma'am that I would choke.
We came in sight of our new farm
We could see neither cabin nor barn.
There where the cabin that morn had been,
Only a pile of boards could be seen.

Tom sprang from the wagon, so did I;
"Oh, Lizzie and May," I heard him cry.

Then came a call from that pile of boards,
"Here we are daddy," were Lizzie's words.
Under the table they both had crept
And when the wind the broad plan had swept,
Some way or other the boards fell 'round,
The table and both were safe and sound.

And that old clock on the mantle there,
It's safety with the children did share,
For there it was on the table still,
Ticking away with a merry will.
It seemed to me 'twas the hand of God,
But after that our house was of sod.
After three more cyclones swept the plain,
We left there ne'er to return again.

THE SPIRIT OF THE BADLANDS.

The Spirit of the Badlands calls away to me,
I hear her gently calling, across a grassy sea;
She calls to me each morning, and many times each day,
She calls and softly beckons, my heart to come away.
I wandered out this morning, listening to her voice,
There's something in its weirdness that makes my heart rejoice.
I wandered down the valleys and up each rugged slope,
And so, tho' lone or weary, my soul is filled with hope.

So odd are all the hills, so quaint are all the dells,
That Nature weaves about me one of her mystic spells;
Tho' Nature's hands wrought harshly, I find some comfort here,
It gives me then some courage, for nature knew no fear.
I wait and ever listening to her voice so strange and wild,
I tremble then with wonder, I feel I am a child.
It is here the Badland Spirit wanders along her ways—
She soothes my troubled spirit; she comforts all my days.

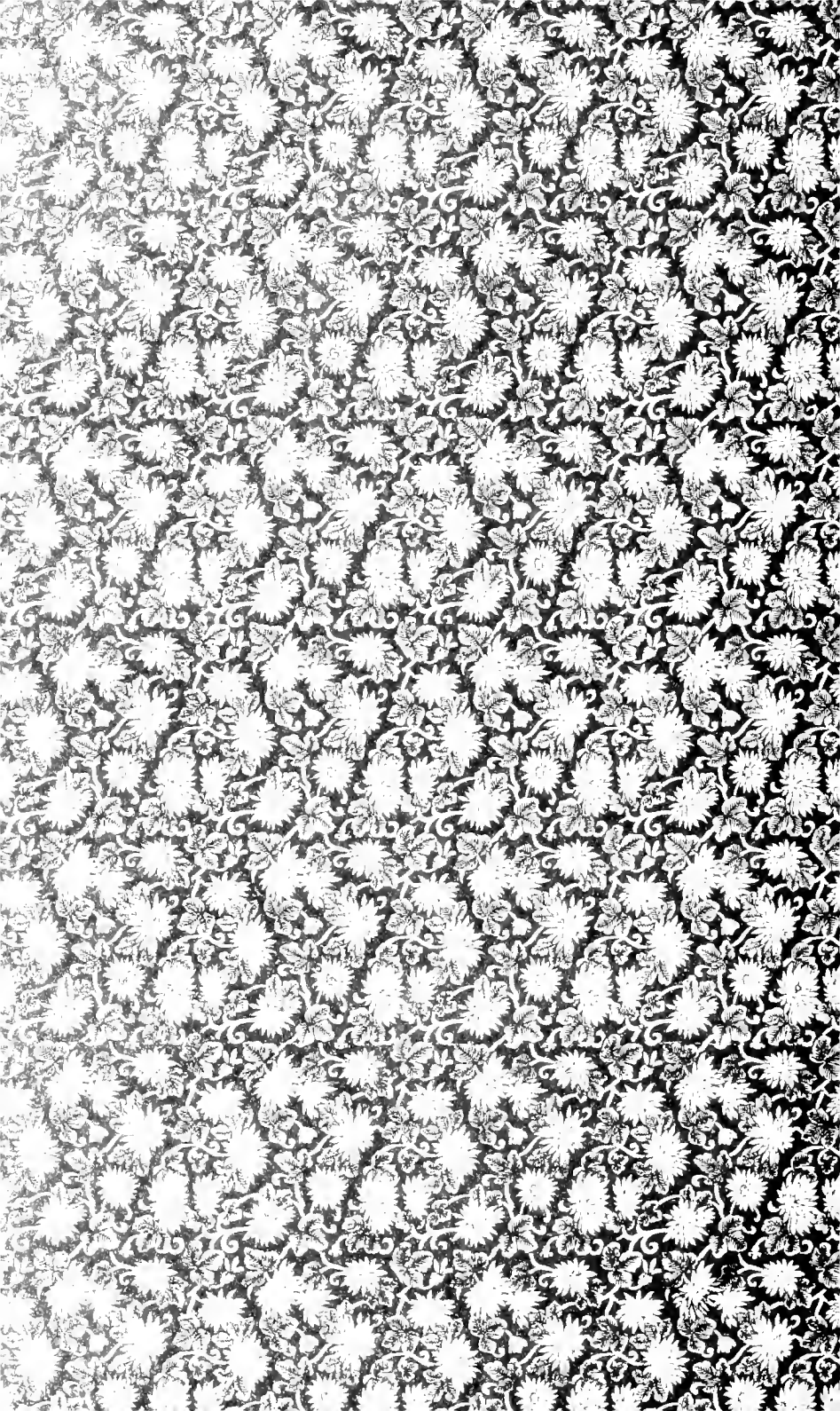
HONYAWKS.

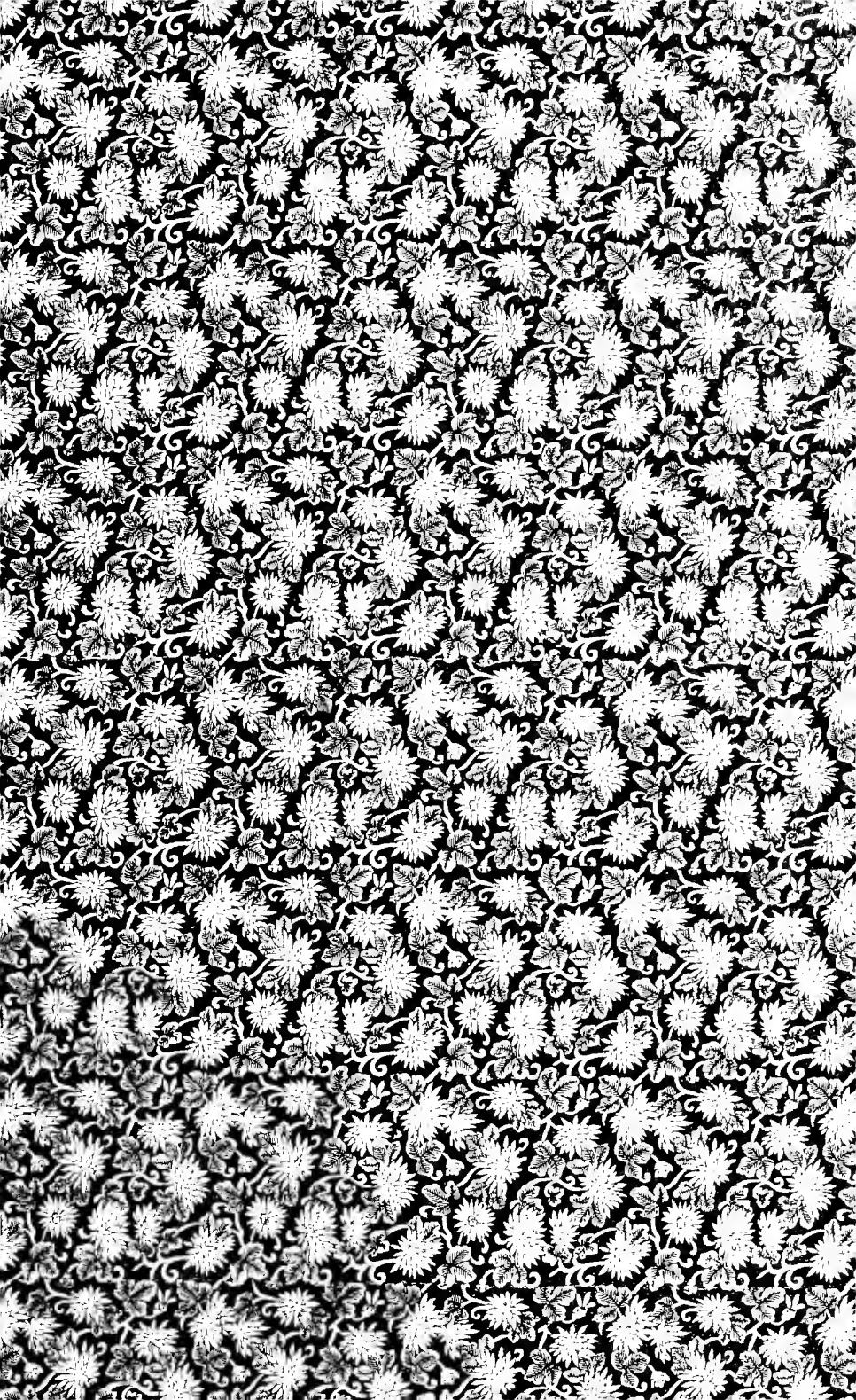
Now the free range days are over,
And our stock has hit the trail,
Now the Honyawk's struck our country,
And the freight comes in by rail;
Oh, we have a sorry feeling,
For the good old days have passed,
And we turn our ponies eastward,
See the Honyawks coming fast.

Oh, the place where once we rounded,
All our cattle white of face;
Oh, the Honyawk's gone and fenced it,
Taken up all open space;
There is nothing left us fellows,
But to go and plow the sod,
We are feeling kind of lonely,
For the trail our ponies trod.

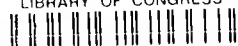
Oh, the Honyawk's hit our country,
And our day has passed away,
We may watch and sigh and wonder;
But the Honyawk's come to stay.
Just as well we'll ship our cattle,
Chase our horses down the trail,
For Honyawks are filing homesteads,
Building cabins stout and frail.

Oh, the Honyawk's hit our country,
Thick and fast they still come in,
Plant potatoes where our stock fed,
Chase our dogies off like sin.
Oh, we needn't stand and wonder
Or sigh for the bygone day,
For the Honyawk's hit our country,
And we know he's come to stay.





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